

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 FMC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09 OES-07

PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 DHA-02 AID-05 MCT-01 /088 W

-----021845Z 040799 /43

P 021744Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6256

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EWWT, PINS, GT, US

SUBJ: GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER PROMISES SUPPORT PROMPT

ACTION ON SHIPPING LEGISLATION

1. SUMMARY. IN ADDITION TO BELIZE (SEPTTEL), GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER TALKED WITH AMBASSADOR ABOUT SHIPPING LEGISLATION, SECURITY OF DIPLOMATS IN GUATEMALA, AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S SIGNATURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTION. END SUMMARY.

2. AT CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER PRIOR TO RETURNING TO UNITED STATES FOR CONSULTATIONS, AMBASSADOR RAISED QUESTION OF PROPOSED RULE FMC HAD INTENDED TO PUBLISH MAY 8. HE NOTED FMC HAD TO DATE REFRAINED FROM DOING SO. FONMIN SAID IT HOPED FMC WOULD NOT PUBLISH BECAUSE GUATEMALAN CONGRESS HAS ALMOST COMPLETED PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION WHICH WILL RESOLVE PROBLEM. AMBASSADOR SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT, BUT WAS CONCERNED BY FACT THAT AGAIN THE PREVIOUS DAY (MAY 31), CONGRESS HAD POSTPONED FINAL ACTION, THIS TIME UNTIL JUNE 2. WE UNDERSTOOD THAT SUCCESSFUL ACTION THAT DAY WOULD BE CRITICAL BECAUSE OF POSSIBILITY CONGRESS MIGHT THEN RECESS UNTIL LAST WEEK IN JUNE. IF CONGRESS DID NOT COMPLETE PASSAGE OF THE BILL THIS WEEK, THE FMC COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO DELAY PUBLICATION

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ANY LONGER. FONMIN SAID HE HAD NOT REALIZED CONGRESSIONAL TIME WAS SO LIMITED AND SAID HE WOULD SPEAK TO PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS IMMEDIATELY. (HE TOLD AMBASSADOR LATER IN THE DAY THAT HE HAD SPOKEN TO PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS WHO HAD CONFIDENTLY ASSURED HIM THAT BILL WOULD BE PASSED ON JUNE 2.)

3. FONMIN BROUGHT UP NEWS REPORT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WILL SIGN THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTION. HE SAID THIS WOULD SET A VERY GOOD EXAMPLE AND IT WAS POSSIBLE MANY LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES WOULD FOLLOW SUIT. IT COULD ALSO LEAD TO OTHER COLLECTIVE OAS ACTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, WHICH GUATEMALA FAVORS. ARA/CEN DIRECTOR MATTHEWS, WHO ACCOMPANIED AMBASSADOR, NOTED THAT US WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO ENTER, EITHER AT TIME OF SIGNING OR WHEN IT IS SENT TO THE SENATE, EITHER A GENERAL OR A SPECIFIC RESERVATION COVERING SUCH QUESTIONS AS ABORTION AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

4. AMBASSADOR REFERRED TO GENERAL SATISFACTION OVER THE RELEASE OF THE SALVADORAN AMBASSADOR THE PREVIOUS EVENING BY HIS KIDNAPPERS, AND MR. MATTHEWS COMMENTED THAT READING OF EGP COMMUNIQUE AT IDB MEETING AND ITS PUBLICATION IN THE PRESS SEEMED TO INDICATE THE GOG'S WILLINGNESS TO PERMIT THE DIFFUSION OF DIVERGENT OPINIONS AND ITS LACK OF FEAR OF DISSIDENT IDEAS. PUBLICATION OF A COMMUNIQUE TO SAVE A MAN'S LIFE WAS, OF COURSE, A VERY DIFFERENT THING FROM RELEASING PRISONERS. FONMIN SAID THAT IF GUATEMALA HAD ANY POLITICAL PRISONERS, WHICH IT DIDN'T, IT WOULD NEVER RELEASE THEM IN RESPONSE TO TERRORIST BLACKMAIL. THAT WAS FIRM GOG POLICY, NO MATTER WHOSE LIFE MIGHT BE AT STAKE.

5. AMBASSADOR ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS ANY APPREHENSION THAT TERRORIST ACTIONS MIGHT INCREASE DURING THIS PERIOD LEADING TO THE MARCH 1978 ELECTIONS. FONMIN SAID WE ALL HAVE TO BE PREPARED FOR AN INCREASE. PRESIDENT HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECENTLY ORDERED MINISTER OF INTERIOR TO CUT BACK ON THE NUMBER OF NATIONAL POLICEMENT ASSIGNED TO EMBASSIES IN ORDER TO MAKE MORE POLICEMENT AVAILABLE FOR STREET PATROLS. HOWEVER, AFTER SALVADORAN AMBASSADOR'S KIDNAPPING, THE DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS (PAPAL NUNCIO) AND THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR HAD COME TO SEE FONMIN AND ASKED THAT ORDER BE RESCINDED AND POLICEMEN ASSIGNED TO EMBASSIES LEFT AT PRESENT LEVEL. FONMIN HAD MADE THAT REQUEST TO INTERIOR MINISTER, BUT HE HAD EMPHASIZED TO THE DIPLOMATS THAT IN TURN HE EXPECTED THEIR COOPERATION IN NOT TAKING UNNECESSARY CHANCES AND RISKS. THEY SHOULD NOT, AS THE SALVADORAN HAD, MOVE ABOUT UNGUARDED. BOSTER

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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